

Havertown, PA -- Congressman Joe Sestak, a Former Fire Marshal, Speaks at the Brookline Fire Company's Annual Pancake Breakfast

Havertown, PA. — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak, a former Fire Marshal in the Navy and a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, spoke at the Brookline Fire Company's Annual Banquet.

"The Brookline Fire Company is the cornerstone of this community," noted Joe at the breakfast. "One of the greatest services in my district comes from first responders who are on the frontlines protecting us. They are required to balance the demands of their service with their families and full-time careers. That is why I am so pleased to join the Brookline Fire Company at today's Annual Pancake Breakfast."

Since 1914, the Brookline Fire Company has been protecting the community. It has transitioned from using a barn and horse-drawn fire equipment to its first official hose cart, a Spider, purchased from the Darby Fire Company on April 5, 1915 for \$75.00. One year later, the Company began building its first official firehouse. The Company's first fire alarm was for a fire burning in a tree on Kathmere Road. Since that time, the Company has had to deal with more dangerous fires started by complex fuels, and the demands of a booming population have intensified the demands on its 43 current members. Still, they remain as always a highly skilled force whose frequent feats of heroism and selfless dedication remind us of how important first responders are to our communities.

The Annual Pancake Breakfast is one of the largest fundraisers that the Company has each year.

At the breakfast, Joe also spoke of his support and cosponsorship of bipartisan legislation to provide tax relief for volunteer first responders. The legislation, the Volunteer Firefighter's Tax Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943), would allow state and local governments the flexibility to develop beneficial tax incentives, including property tax abatements, retirement awards, death benefits, health benefits, and state income tax credits, for encouraging recruitment and retention for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel. Joe hopes that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and local municipalities will continue to work to provide their volunteer emergency responders with the appropriate incentives, rewarding them for the first-class service they offer the citizens of Pennsylvania.

"As a Fire Marshal in the Navy, I know of the selfless commitment of first-responders. It is vital we enact legislation that will encourage the recruitment and retention of these invaluable members of our community," stated Joe.

Joe plans to visit all the fire and police stations in the district. He has already visited Ridley Park Fire Co. 1, Radnor Fire Co., Swarthmore Fire Co., Folsom Fire Co., Llanerch Fire Co., Prospect Park Fire Department, and Cardington-Stonehurst Fire Company. On Saturday, March 3, Joe attended the 101st Annual Awards dinner of the Delaware County Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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